One word or two?

**Already** and **All ready**
Already is an adverb meaning *something that has happened before.*
- I am *already* at the mall.
All ready is an adjective that refers to *a group who is prepared.*
- We are *all ready* to leave.

**Awhile** and **A while**
Awhile is an adverb meaning *for a short time.*
- I guess we can stay *awhile* longer.
A while is a paired article and noun meaning *period of time.*
- We stayed at the concert for *a while.*

**A lot** and **Allot**
A lot is always spelled as two words and means *many.*
- You can put *a lot* of marshmallows in your mouth.
Allot is a transitive verb that means to *assign or designate.*
- We will *allot* you two cars for your trip.

**All right** and NOT **Alright**
All right can be an adjective that mean *yes or OK.*
- I’m *all right.*
All right can also be an adverb meaning *satisfactory.*
- The dinner was *all right*
Alright is not a currently valid English word. Do not use it.

**Anyone** and **Any one**
Anyone is a pronoun meaning *any person at all.*
- *Anyone* who can explain the meaning of life is a genius.
Any one is a paired adjective and noun meaning *a specific item in a group.*
- *Any one* of those people could have killed him.

**Anyway** and **Any way**
Anyway is an adverb meaning *in any case or nonetheless.*
- I told him not to, but he saw the movie *anyway.*
Any way means *any particular course, direction, or manner.*
- *Any way* you go might lead to danger.

**Maybe** and **May be**
Maybe is an adverb meaning *perhaps.*
- *Maybe* we should wait until the rain stops.
May be is a future form of *be.*

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**The Writing Centre**
**Department of English**
I *may be* our last chance at winning the game.

Some More Complex Words:

### Lay and Lie
The verb *lay* means *put* and like that verb requires an object. If you are not sure of when to use *lay* try substituting the word with *place* or *put*.

We must *lay* our cards on the table. (We must *put* our cards on the table.)
She *laid* the octopus in the pot. (She *placed* the octopus in the pot.)

The word *lie* means *be reclined* or *be located* and does not take an object. The past of the verb *lie* is *lay*, just as with the present form of the verb *lay*.

If you are tired you should *lie* down and relax.
Every day, I *lie* on my sofa after lunch.
Abandoned flying saucers were *lying* in the desert.
Yesterday, the cat *lay* in the sun, charging itself for another busy night.
The papers have *lain* on the desk for several days.

With closely related meanings and overlapping forms, the verbs *lay* and *lie* are probably the two most frequently confused words in English. Typically, people will use *lay* and *laying* when they need *lie* and *lying*. Adding to the confusion is the second meaning of the lie, namely, saying something that isn’t true. In this meaning *lie* is a regular verb (*lie, lied, lied)*.

**Remember** this helpful hint:

Only hens can *lay* on a couch (i.e. lay eggs).
People must always *lay* something somewhere (e.g. lay a baby in a crib, lay a sick dog on a couch, or lay one’s books on the table)

### Which and That and Who
When *that* introduces a relative clause, the clause is often restrictive, that is, essential to the complete meaning of the sentence. In *The keys that I lost last month have been found*, the keys referred to a particular set. Without the *that* clause, the sentence *The keys have been found*, would be vague and probably puzzling.

The relative pronoun *that* represents the preceding noun and introduces an essential clause describing that noun.

Many of the workers *that* built the pyramids died while working.
The negotiator made an offer *that* was very attractive to the union.

The relative pronoun *that* is sometimes omitted when it is used as an object.
The garage (*that*) we take our car to is very reliable.
The films (*that*) Chaplin made have become classics.
That can act as a conjunction. When this occurs, that is often omitted, especially when a dependent clause begins with a personal pronoun (he, she, etc.) or a proper name (Sally, John, etc.). She said (that) they would arrive in separate cars.

The relative pronoun which represents the preceding noun and introduces a non-essential clause describing that noun.

Mr. Murphy’s favourite hat, which I rescued from the sinking ship, now sits gathering dust in one of his many closets.

Humber College, which has North America’s only comedy diploma program, is located near Pearson International Airport.

The relative pronoun who represents the preceding noun when it refers to a human being.

She is the only one of the managers who can speak Japanese fluently.

Exercise

1) Anyone vs. Any one
   I won’t pick just __________ to be my wife.

2) Maybe vs. May be
   We __________ in trouble.

3) Already vs. All ready
   I ________ ate lunch today.

4) That vs. Which vs. Who
   Tom, ______ killed my dog, isn’t a nice person.

5) Awhile vs. A while
   His speech went on for ________.

6) Any way vs. Anyway
   I am going to go to the store __________.

7) Lay vs. Lie
   Go and ______ down.

8) Lay vs. Lie
   Go and _____ the papers on my desk.

9) A lot vs. Allot
   I have _______ of money.

10) That vs. Which vs. Who
    The car _______ rolled down the hill crashed into a tree.